A Different World by Joseph Goebbels

It is astonishing, hardly believable, how the state of the world can change entirely within a short time. Modern war speaks its own language, and ideas and principles that twenty years ago were standard military theory and practice are now entirely outdated and antiquated. If one compares the world situation of Sunday, 7 December, the day when Japan gave President Roosevelt the appropriate answer to his impudent provocations and shameless affronts, with today, one will without doubt conclude that the position of the Axis powers has improved in a way that even a few days before military and political experts would have thought highly improbable.

All the confident predictions of the U.S.A. and England have collapsed. Those in Washington apparently thought the patience and untiring persistence of Japanese negotiators were signs of weakness. They were so surprised by the sudden attacking spirit of the Japanese army that they as yet have found no plausible explanation for what happened. The national enthusiasm, patriotic passion, and devotion of a military people have once again won a great triumph, while the liberal-democratic jugglers find themselves amidst the ruins of many of their vague hopes and dreams.

These developments have not surprised us. We have never considered Japan, its army, its people and its leaders any less than they are today. Japan suffers from the same unsolved problems as we and Italy. It has no room for its growing population. The land suffers from a growing shortage of raw materials and economic prospects. Its plans for a new order in the Far East are forced on it by nature and its geographical and territorial situation. Unless it wishes to give up all claims to being a great power, it must follow the laws fate ordains.

Clearly, Mr. Roosevelt and his plutocratic clique have never understood this, and probably never will. They see the national aspirations of Japan in the same way as a greedy capitalist, who would prefer to burn down his factory rather than give the workers what they need to maintain a basic existence — that which is absolutely necessary if they are even to maintain life. Giving them what they need would be no great sacrifice for the owner, but he stays firm out of principle. In relations between great powers, there comes a time in which negotiations are making no progress, and one must turn to arms.

It is characteristic of the world-famed stubborn arrogance of the Anglo-Saxon warmongers and arsonist clique that they entirely underestimated Japan's military capacities and possibilities, for which they have had to pay shockingly heavy price. In London and Washington they presumably are rethinking the hopes they had even two weeks ago about America's entry into the war. In any event, one senses considerable disappointment in Mr. Roosevelt's and Mr. Churchill's public statements, and the criticism of their remarkably foolish behavior that has found its way past the dictatorship of a diligent censor shows that this disappointment is also shared by public opinion.

We certainly do not underestimate the possibilities remaining for England and the United States. We have frequently said that colossuses of the size of these two world powers do not fall in days, weeks, or even months. We have to assume a hard and pitiless fight stands before us in which there will be ups and downs, and that even we will not be able to avoid some occasional setbacks. That is not decisive. What is decisive is the fact that the chances of the Axis are far better, and that their leaders will not hesitate to take advantage of that fact.

One cannot ignore the military potential at their disposal. However, a comparison with the third year of the World War is entirely false here. We held firm then for four years, and lost only because of weak leadership. Germany entered the war in 1939 far better prepared than it was in 1914. The difficulty then was to defeat France, Britain's traditional continental ally. That we have already done. The Balkans are no threat any longer. The Soviet Union has lost its offensive capacity and is no longer a decisive factor in the war. Italy and Japan, two world powers that opposed us in the World War, now are fighting on our side. That counts twice for us, not to mention the countless spiritual and moral imponderables that favor us. Altogether, the present balance of forces is wholly different than it was during the World War.

We hardly find it necessary today to rely on a belief in our national invincibility to predict that victory is certain and inevitable. The facts lead to that conclusion. They speak unanimously for us. Our figures are accurate, and if the other side proposes different figures, they depend on bad bookkeeping. The neutral nations agree more and more. The increasing difficulties of civilian life, unavoidable given the duration of the war, will not have much influence on the war's outcome. They are about the same on

both sides. If a longer than normal winter means that potatoes come to market later than usual, it hardly means that they grow any faster in England because it is governed by plutocrats instead of National Socialists. If there are transportation difficulties in fall and winter that affect big cities and industrial areas, things are no different for the enemy. People stand in lines in England outside tobacco stores just as they do here. The fact that certain goods and luxuries are available in shops there is only a matter of their high price, which keeps the masses from purchasing them, not the upper classes. This gives the appearance of prosperity, but not its reality.

The thing to keep in mind is that we do not consider these factors important to our chances of victory, while England has built its hopes on them. We sometimes make the mistake of seeing the difficulties in civilian life only here, assuming that the other side is living just as it did during peacetime. That is hardly the case. The fact that England is an island is a disadvantage, not an advantage, given the nature of war today. From a military standpoint it would be difficult for us to invade Great Britain, but it would be at least as difficult, and probably more so, for England to invade Europe. We have the advantage of secure rail lines. England must bring in by ship everything that it cannot itself produce. Its fleet is in greater danger today than ever before, as was recently proven by its defeats in the Pacific. England will find it almost impossible to attack us. Its attacks on the periphery, even if they succeed, will not have a significant impact on the general situation. The British Isles are a prisoner of their own insularity. The war will end when London understands that. Until that happens, Great Britain will have to suffer recurring blows before at last the fatal one is struck.

Japan has shown once again the enormous power in a people’s national dynamics. One is deeply moved by the accounts of the heroic deeds of Japan’s death-defying naval airmen. Japan knows that, like Germany and Italy, it is fighting for its future, for its very life. The alliance of these three great powers that despite their millennia of history retain youthful vitality is natural, the result of the inescapable power of a bitter historical logic. They see in this war their best chance at national existence. Their leadership and their peoples know what is at stake. It is true that they were forced into this war, but they are fighting it offensively, not defensively. Their young men at the front burn with passion to solve the life problems of their nations with weapons. Never before have they had such an opportunity to test their courage, their strength, their manly readiness. They see themselves affronted and insulted by plutocracy’s leaders in a way that rules out any possibility of

surrender. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt still have no idea what they have gotten themselves into. They may have envisioned a pleasant war in which they would stroll to Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo, supported by the people of countries who had been seduced by their leaders. They overlooked the fact that these governments are only saying and doing what their people want, even insist on or demand.

There is no greater mistake than to assume a gap between these governments and their people. The World War was only an intimation of coming things for the oppressed nations, regardless of which side they were on. This war is fought by people who know what they are doing. It is not only a gigantic fight for their national honor or prestige, but also a struggle for the absolute basic essentials of life, for space, work, food, and life itself. It is a fight to end the eternal crises, for a radical solution to the growing problems of their nations, which cannot be mastered any longer within their own borders. The Axis powers have been forced to defend themselves. They will do so with no sentimental looking back. They are risking everything. They will not be stopped by humanitarian phrases. Democratic tricks will not work here; fighting is the only way.

A world determined by such factors is ever changing, as the events of the past two weeks demonstrate. It demands the highest degree of alertness and readiness. Leadership and people must always be on watch, ready to take advantage of any opportunity. The day will come when the enemy begins to crumble. No one can predict when that will be, but we all know that it will come.